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MESOPOTAMIA AND BABYLON

THE REBUILT CITY—THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY

By JAMES DUNBAR

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MESOPOTAMIA
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BABYLON

THE REBUILT CITY—THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY

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Invercargill, New Zealand
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"The Ships of Chittim," etc., etc.

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SYNOPSIS

Babylon and its builder Nimrod

The Tower of Babel

The Great City Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar

Description of the city its hanging gardens

Its present condition

Modern town of Hillah built on site of Babylon

Successive sieges of Ancient Babylon

Unfulfilled prophecies. Babylon *not* Rome.

Its final glory and utter desolation by fire

Antichrist its builder

The great expedition of The Ten Kings to destroy it

Great flight of captive Jews across the Syrian Desert

Their miraculous journey of 400 miles. Jonah's Gourd

Armageddon. Millennial Gleams.

BABYLON

THE prophecies concerning Babylon as given by the Old Testament prophets and also by the Apostle John in Revelation, have given rise to much diversity of thought. Some state unhesitatingly that all the judgments foretold against this great city have been fulfilled to the letter, and, its present condition bears living witness to this effect.

When confronted with the prophecies in Revelation, it is maintained that the city Babylon there, is Rome described under another name. While much has been written to prove this view of Scripture, there are others who maintain that all that has come over Babylon in time past, is only a part of the cup she has to drink at God's hand, and believe that Scripture speaks of the city being built again, and in the midst of its sin and impiety against God, overwhelming judgment is yet to fall upon it and utter destruction by the result.

It appears from comparing Scripture with Scripture that this is so, and the purpose of these pages is to place in order before the reader those portions of the Word of God that show the building, glory and utter desolation of this great metropolis of the earth in the tribulation days after the Church of God has been taken away by the coming of the Lord Jesus.

It will be a safe beginning in our study to hear what the Word of God has to say of Babylon from its inception to the present time as well as the evidence of what has passed into history of this mighty city.

The first mention of Babylon or Babel is in Genesis 10:10 where Nimrod is given as the builder's name. This Nimrod was a grandson of Ham, Noah's son, and the word picture the Spirit of God gives of him is very significant. The curse of Noah had gone out on the family from which Nimrod was descended that they were to be "servants for ever." Here we see the determination to prove God untrue. At least one man will be no one's servant, not even God's. Nimrod began to be a mighty one in the earth and was "a mighty hunter before the Lord." This does not mean that he lived under Jehovah's eye from day

to day like Elijah of later times who could say "The Lord before whom I stand." The whole tenor of the description implies that God was flouted and spurned, and even in those days men held their breath as they mentioned his deeds of impiety against God—"Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." The desire to do according to his own will is apparent, and the longing for power and kingship is also seen, for the Old World in those primal days succeeding the flood had evidence borne it to this effect.

We now read "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel in the Land of Shinar." Although Babel means the same as Babylon and is so in the original Scriptures, we read of it twice only under the form of Babel. Originally it means "The gate of the God" or the "Gate of God," speaking no doubt of the earthly glory that its founder gave it, he who owned no God beside himself. From Shinar Nimrod went to Assyria and builded Nineveh. The land in this quarter seems to have been the cradle of the human race, and from here the nations are scattered far and near. The city Babel, or Babylon, figured as the centre of a great undertaking, which was to add to the glory of their city and give them a lasting name

that no city should vie with theirs. The inhabitants proposed a great tower, whose top should reach to heaven. It is very important to notice here that the country is minutely described as regards its natural resources. The material for the great tower they intend building is formed from clay, burned into hard brick, and in the absence of mortar bitumen is used to bind the bricks together. We think this is important to notice in view of what the Scriptures say concerning its final overthrow.

However, God came down to see the city and the tower and confounded their language, so that they were unable to proceed with their undertaking. Many were left and the city soon grew into importance until it reached the summit of its power and glory under Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonish king about 600 years B. C. It became the greatest and most splendid capital of the then known world. Some writers of the fourth century B. C. describe the city as standing in the midst of an extended plain of great fertility. The city was divided into two parts by the River Euphrates, which flowed from North to South. Both these divisions were enclosed by one wall and the whole formed one complete square nearly 50 miles in compass.

The walls were said to be broad enough to allow several chariots to run abreast and to be about 75 feet high. The city had 100 gates, made of brass, of enormous size, 25 on each side. From these ran broad streets at right angles to the wall, thus dividing the city into a number of smaller squares, each street being over 12 miles long. Along each bank of the river ran an embankment or quay, while immediately behind these towered high walls like those around the city, and which shut off the city from the river. These walls are pierced by gates to give access to the river as required. Historians state that there were ferry boats in constant use going from one side of the river to the other. The two parts of the city were connected by a remarkable bridge across the river a furlong in length and 60 feet wide; and to prevent inconvenience from the swellings of the river, two canals were cut above the city, by which the super-abundant waters were carried off into the Tigris. Besides, prodigious embankments were made effectually to confine the stream within its channel and as a security against inundation. The materials for these stupendous works were taken principally from the Western side of the city, where an ex-

traordinary lake was dug, the depth of which was 35 feet, and its circumference 45 miles.

At the two ends of the bridge were magnificent palaces, which some describe as having had an underground tunnel under the bed of the river by which one could pass from one palace to the other. The old palace on the East side was about 30 furlongs in compass, having 3 distinct walls one interior to the other. The new palace on the opposite side was four times as large as the other and was said to have been 7 or 8 miles in its outer enclosure. Within this were the world-famed "hanging gardens," forming an area of 400 feet square, containing about 3½ acres. They consisted of terraces raised one above another, till they equalled the city wall which was 75 feet high.

Twenty massive walls of great width and 11 feet apart supported the floor or bottom of the gardens. This floor was made of large flat stones and covered over with many feet of earth in depth so that trees of 50 feet in height grew in it and cast their pleasing shade around. On the highest level was a reservoir with a machine by which water was drawn from the river for the supply of the whole gardens.

This magnificent work was prepared for the gratification of the Queen Amyitus, daughter of King Astyages; that she might behold something resembling the hills and woodlands of her native country Media, that lay far North of the plains of Babylon.

Near to the old palace stood the Temple of Belus or Jupiter, forming a square nearly 3 miles in compass. In the middle of the temple was an immense tower, 600 feet high, and rising tier above tier in 8 distinct towers each 75 feet high. The summit was attained by means of stairs winding round the outside. On the summit of this great pile was a golden image 40 feet in height and said to be worth three and a half millions of money. Smaller statues, utensils and treasures contained in the pile brought the value of the temple to an estimated amount of forty-two millions sterling.

Such was the wealth of ancient Babylon—the wonder of the world then—now alas! a scene of desolation, and surely waiting the time the inspired Word speaks of when every vestige shall be swept away in its final desolation, as set forth in the Scriptures and followed out in the succeeding pages.

All this glory has passed away: no vestige remains to show that Babylon ever was the glory of kingdoms. In its stead heaps of ruins stand where formerly the great men of the kingdom lived and ruled, and one would naturally conclude that Babylon has sunk never to appear again.

However, let us examine the sure Word of God, and see if it sheds light on the desolate scene. One prophecy that has not been literally carried out as yet is seen in Jeremiah 51:26, and is conclusive proof that the minute and solemn judgments portrayed so vividly by Isaiah and Jeremiah belong to a future day.

Great and many as the calamities are that have come over Babylon in centuries past as the result of changes in world empire, they are as nothing to the final desolations that the restored city will see.

The prophecy reads thus: "And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner nor a stone for foundations." This cannot be explained away in a satisfactory manner, for the Scripture means exactly what it says. The difficulty comes through men trying to make the prophecy fit into the present day. It is a well known fact that at the pres-

ent time there is a large city of 10,000 inhabitants about 4 miles from the ruins of Babylon, known by the name of Hillah.

The materials used for the erection of this city have been taken mainly from the ruined edifices of Babylon, both for the "foundation" and the "corner." The bricks are mostly 18 inches square by 3 inches thick, stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name in the centre. The traveller who goes down the streets of Hillah to-day is confronted everywhere with evidences of Babylon and its great builder Nebuchadnezzar, for his name appears on nearly every house.

Many of the inhabitants of Hillah have no other trade than to dig among the great mounds that lie scattered over the immense plain. This they do in search of perfect bricks which they clean and sell to the neighbouring towns as far as Bagdad for building purposes.

The Kasr or Palace—one of the greatest ruins known—has been the mine where the bulk of bricks have been taken from, and where father and son for generations have taken up the other's work and passed it on to the generation following.

It is thought by some that Hillah itself was within the boundaries of ancient Babylon. However, it is plainly seen for the purposes of our subject that the final desolation of Babylon has not yet come; else we would not have a town built out of its ruins. When the final judgments fall upon the restored city—as we believe Scripture shows—no stone will henceforth be taken for a corner or foundation for ever.

PART TWO

THE main prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Babylon are those given by Isaiah and Jeremiah. It is possible that the judgments pronounced against the city long ago have been partially fulfilled in the same manner as when Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and said "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," etc. It is quite clear to the reader on referring to Joel's prophecy that its complete fulfilment is for a coming day. In like manner here we read of the walls of Babylon being broken down. This has been literally accomplished; the walls have disappeared long ago. It may be possible, however, for the walls to be built again when the city is restored to some of its former glory.

Another important point to notice is that Babylon has never been destroyed by fire or as the result of an invasion. When Belshazzar was slain and Cyrus took the city, Babylon lost none of its

greatness. It was comparatively a one-sided siege, as the king and city were surprised in the midst of feasting.

THE SIEGES OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

In view of the importance of our subject, it will add interest to our study and confirm the statement that the great siege described in the Scriptures does not agree with any of those in past years, described in histories.

The occasion of the taking of Babylon is described in Daniel's prophecy. Cyrus was raised up by God specially as His servant to take Babylon and release the Jews who had been captive for 70 years. History tells us the city was impregnable. Cyrus and his officers rode round the walls but failed to find an opening. A trench was dug round the city; towers were erected; Babylon was besieged. The army was divided into twelve parts that each, monthly by turn, might keep watch throughout the year. Babylon had enough provision for twenty years, and was a cause of perplexity to Cyrus, who was conscious of the great waste of time. It was at last suggested that the Euphrates should be turned out of its course. The great trench was extended round the walls on

every side to drain the river. Cyrus formed his army into two parts, one at the entrance of the river to the city, and the other where the river flowed out. As soon as the water ceased to flow in its usual channel, the vast besieging army passed by the bed of the river as a road into the city. The gates of the palace were shut. The guards stationed before them were drinking beside a blazing light when the Medes and Persians rushed upon them. The altered clamour caught the ear of those in the palace, the bright light showed them the destruction, and not aware of the fact that an enemy was inside the walls of Babylon, the king commanded those within to see the reason of the slaughter. No sooner were the gates opened than the invaders sprang in and slew the godless throng. Thus ended Cyrus' siege lasting two years. His invading army consisted of 120,000 horsemen, 2,000 chariots, 600,000 footmen, as testified by the historians Zenophon and Herodatus. Gobryas, an Assyrian governor whose son the king of Babylon had slain, was the chief commander in the actual assault on the city, and his hand was among those who slew Beltshazzar and his retinue.

Cyrus did not destroy Babylon. He left it to

his successor Darius in all its glory and strength. The Babylonians rebelled against Darius and made preparations for a siege, defied the whole power of the Persian Empire, and resolved never to yield. After twenty months of the siege had gone by, a man approached the great city walls covered with blood and marks of stripes, his ears and nose newly cut off, a helpless object, the victim of savage cruelty. He had fled from the army of Darius, and was none other than Zophyrus—a noble prince of Persia. He made it plain to those on the walls that because he had asked Darius to raise the siege, that tyrant had treated him as they now beheld him. He intreated them to let him in, and he would disclose the designs of the Persians and get revenged for his suffering. This they gladly did. Being put in charge of a small command, he sallied forth on the tenth day and annihilated 1000 Persians. In seven days more twice that number of Persians appeared only to meet the fate of the first company. The Babylonians were overjoyed, and gave him a higher command. When twenty days had passed, 4,000 of the enemy appeared, and Zophyrus, attacking them by way of the Chaldean gates, killed them on the spot.

For this victory he was made commander of the army and keeper of the city walls. Darius now moved his whole army towards the walls which were manned to repel him, when Zophyrus' treachery was apparent. Opening the Belidian and Cissian gates, the flower of Persia's army broke into the city. The whole scheme was a snare, invented by Zophyrus. Thus was Babylon taken a second time.

Alexander the Great came against Babylon, and the Persian general surrendered the city into his hands; the inhabitants meanwhile eagerly flocking to the walls to see their new king and exchanged without a struggle the Persian for the Grecian yoke. Alexander tried to restore it to its former glory, and meant to make it the centre of a universal kingdom. The Temple of Belus was rebuilt and the river banks repaired, but in the midst of this, his last undertaking, Alexander died.

The great city was afterwards taken by Antigonus, then years later by Demetrius, who on entering it found that the inhabitants had fled to the marshy place of the Euphrates for safety. The land was plundered by the soldiers for their own use.

After him came Antiochus the Great, and finally, 130 years before the Christian era, the Parthians became masters of the city, and exceeded all previous conquerors in their cruelty to the inhabitants. Himerus set fire to the forum and some of the temples and destroyed the fairest part of the city.

As yet none of these sieges fulfil the prophetic Word. Babylon was never destroyed, but it fell into decay, as its condition shews at the present day (1916).

A new city was built 40 miles away by another ruler on purpose to cause the decline of Babylon. This it surely did, as the population went to the new city. This city ultimately sunk under a fatal blow given by the Romans, when the city was taken and burnt and 300,000 of its inhabitants massacred. Bagdad, 15 miles from the site of ancient Selencia, is at present the surviving town of this district.

In the fourth century, the walls of Babylon were repaired to form an enclosure for wild beasts, and Babylon was converted into a hunting field for the pastime of the Persian monarchs.

We see from this then that the great day of desolation, fire and slaughter foretold by the proph-

ets is yet in store for Babylon which will be rebuilt shortly.

We note also that it is no figurative city and people; nor yet a system that is meant when the long array of judgments are foretold. The 50 and 51st chapters of Jeremiah are given in minute detail by the Spirit of God. Zedekiah the king was in captivity in Babylon that then existed, and Seraiah, the chief chamberlain, was about to set out from Jerusalem for the distant city, when Jeremiah gave him a written account of the evil that would come upon the great city. On reaching Babylon, Seraiah would see the wealth and magnificence of the place; when after reading the judgments pronounced by God through Jeremiah, he was to add his own testimony that the great city would ultimately be desolate without man or beast, and with a stone tied round the book, drop it in the Euphrates and say "Thus shall Babylon sink and not rise," thus pointing on to the final desolation that will come.

Having fixed these points in our study, namely, that it is a real city meant, and the actual river Euphrates, we will begin to compare Scripture with Scripture to know God's mind as revealed in His Word.

If Babylon is to be rebuilt again, we should expect to have it clearly stated in the Scriptures. For support of this we turn to Zechariah 5th chapter, verses 5-11. An ephah is seen going forth and the resemblance is the same all over the earth. This unmistakably shows that commerce is meant, as an ephah is a measure. The prophet keeps on looking, and sees a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah, and is told her name is "lawlessness." As he looks, he sees a round piece of lead—a talent—cast on the mouth of the ephah, covering up the woman, so to speak. While the prophet is looking on, two women appear who have large wings like a stork. Between them they lift the ephah with the woman and the talent of lead up from the earth and proceed to take it away.

He asks the angel more about the strange vision and is told that these two women bear the ephah "to build her a house in the land of Shinar, and when it is prepared, she shall be set there upon her own base" *(R. V.)*. This clearly speaks of a great building to be set up in the land of Shinar or Babylonia. The chief agents in setting it up are "two women with wings." This would suggest to us two nations, with rapid means of trans-

port. "The daughter of Zion," "the daughter of Babylon," "the daughter of the famous nations" are terms which refer to a nation or city when God has reason to refer to them. The woman connected with the ephah and talent of lead has reference to the wicked city to be set up in the plains of Babylonia. Commerce is to be the main factor in its establishment.

There is to be much wickedness in the trade of the city and also injustice. The Septuagint renders the word "resemblance" as "injustice" in Zechariah, chapter 5, 6th verse. Sodom of old and the cities of the plains which God destroyed in days gone by were described as "wicked and sinners before God exceedingly." Four thousand years have passed since the Spirit of God caused this description to be given. Time has increased the sin and infidelity that exists among mankind. The darkening horizon around us in every phase of life, social and political, tells of the federation of sin and infidelity that will rear its hydra head over all Christendom in a few fleeting years. Paris, Vienna, New York and other great cities are held up as whirlpools of sin and iniquity. God has given us full warrant for saying that these places as they exist in this day of Gospel light

are tame compared to the awful sink of corruption that "Babylon rebuilt" will be—"The mother of abominations of the earth." Satan cast down from heaven—to his new sphere: the earth—, hounding men and women on in sin, debauchery, blasphemy, brazen infidelity, devil worship, and rushing them into an abyss of woe.

Poor world! poor dwellers on the earth! what awful days are before you!

PART THREE

THE great city soon to occupy the attention of all the dwellers on the earth, will rise immediately from among the ruins of what is now known as Ancient Babylon. Calm meditation of Revelation 17th chapter, viewed in the light of the Old Testament, seems to give a clear and concise description of the restored city as the Apostle saw it when in the visions of God in Patmos.

It is seen situated in a wilderness which we recognize as the wilderness of Lower Mesopotamia or the tract of country between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, which has long been a sandy waste. We believe it is not a "church" that is seen in this prophecy but a real city. We trust the evidence from Scripture to be given in support of this view will be conclusive. Towns are not usually built in the midst of a wilderness, although we have some such that are well known as Timbuctoo in the Sahara desert and which is

said to be dependent on outside sources for its supplies.

This great metropolis—Babylon restored—will be in a similar position. The river Euphrates running through the city will give it the character of a seaport and enable its supplies to reach it by means of ships. Doubtless also railways will pour their burdens at its doors from every quarter. At the present time much valuable work has been done in guiding the waters of this river into its old time channels, thus bringing a large area under ideal conditions for agriculture; much in the same manner as has been accomplished in Egypt during the past decade or two.

Prophecy views the restored city under the figure of a woman. Let us see how Scripture bears this out. The Apostle John got the latest view from the risen Lord, and describes a woman sitting on a scarlet coloured beast having seven heads and ten horns.

With all due deference to what has been written by many students of prophecy regarding this part of the inspired Word, we submit that this gives a clue to the builder and time of its reappearance. The builder is undoubtedly Antichrist seen here under the figure of the beast

with seven heads. The heads point to the successive world powers that this world has seen and terminating in Antichrist when he assumes the reins of government. Revelation 17:10 says "Five kings are fallen, one is, the other is not yet come and when he cometh he must continue a short space." This is spoken, as being the state of things when John beheld them in vision at Patmos. Verse 9 says, "The seven heads are seven mountains" and they, the mountains, are seven kings. There is no warrant so far as we can discover for saying that this refers to Rome built on seven hills. The Scripture says definitely "the seven mountains" are "seven kings." This cannot be whittled away to mean that they were anything else but kings. If the use of the word "mountain" is looked at in the Scripture, it bears out clearly that men are referred to.

In verse 9, the woman is seen sitting on the seven mountains. Every world power has been a support to Babylon since ancient times, beginning with Nimrod and continuing to Antichrist as the seventh. The woman is also said to sit on the scarlet coloured beast. This refers to the latter end of Antichrist's reign, where the remains of every preceding world power is cen-

tered in himself and he is the eighth. The Scripture says the eighth is of the seventh, meaning that they are one and the same.* As the eighth he is solely responsible for carrying the woman, that is, the city exists by his will—it is dependent on him for everything. He wills that it shall far outshine any city the world has seen, and so as the great world empires that preceded him sought to give Babylon a mighty place and name, he too, this later prince, will see that the restored city will rank as the world's wonder. Briefly put, successive kings have upheld Babylon in her career during many centuries. Thus she is said to "sit" upon them, *i. e.* Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Antichrist as seventh head, mountain or king, representing the last of the world powers. Finally, supreme power being vested in him, all the world wonders after him, and Babylon has for her sole liege lord, him to whom all the Scriptures have pointed for ages —the man of sin.

This statement is further proved as the Scripture is looked into. The beast had ten horns; verse 12 of chapter 17 states: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have re-

*See other book for fuller details of Antichrist's rise and progress. "What shall be done in the dry?"

ceived no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." This means that these ten kings will reign contemporarily with the restored city, and be at the beck and call of him who seeks to usurp the power that is God's alone. We think this important introduction is clear to every reader.

The early months of 1913 saw great preparations for the establishment of a capital city for Federated Australia. The name ultimately chosen "Canberra" was given to a large tract of unoccupied land where a great city already planned is to be built in the near future. Of necessity a vast amount of money must be expended before this is accomplished.

Turning to Scripture already quoted that "a house was to be built in the land of Shinar." We see that a new capital will be designed and built in the wilderness or unoccupied lands of Mesopotamia. The wealth that will belong to Christians when the Lord comes will be left behind; this will become the property of the state or of individuals (relatives almost certainly.) At any rate it is safe to say money will flow in to build this great city. Thousands of prisoners of war will doubtless be available, many of them Jews,

as in days gone by their forefathers had built Pithom and Rameses, the treasure cities of Egypt when under the yoke of Pharaoh.

The vision shows the woman in Revelation 17 "sitting on many waters." The force of this word in the references given means "to sit enthroned" and is used in chapter 18 and 7th verse "I sit a queen" as her conscious knowledge of the place she occupies among the nations or "waters" with whom she trades. Her influence will be felt far and near in the commerce of the world. The talent of lead and the ephah measure which Zechariah saw in his vision and which refers to trade and commerce going eastward to Shinar will have their fulfilment at this time. Verse 15—"The waters are peoples, multitudes and nations and tongues." The whole world will be searched for materials for this city. The builder of it will be rightly named the "wilful king," nothing must come in the way of his purposes being fulfilled. The merchants of the earth will be given prices for their goods that will make them rich quickly. "The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" *(chap. 18:3)*.

Here are some of the articles that are to find

a ready market in this vast restored city:—gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, silk, scarlet, thyine wood, (or the arar tree from Barbary considered indestructible and of great value) ivory, all precious woods, brass, iron, marble, cinnamon,* incense, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, finest flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots (these refer to four wheeled vehicles; the word is used only once in the New Testament and may point to motor cars; note the oil previously mentioned). The last of the articles of merchandise given in the inspired list are "bodies and souls of men."

Picture to yourself this fair city stretching out over many square miles. The noble river Euphrates running through it, sparkling again as of old time in the sun, bears on its broad bosom ships from every nation, great wharfs and storehouses, locomotion of every kind distributing the enormous imports to every quarter. Men, as many as grasshoppers, moving everywhere transacting the business of the city. The vast factories in which the craftsmen work (or labour) will abound eve-

*Cinnamon was part of the holy anointing oil. It was used as a perfume to the bed of the adulteress in Proverbs 7:17. Doubtless it will be much in evidence for similar purposes in the days that the cup of Babylon is filling up full with iniquity.

rywhere and gorgeous buildings in which doubtless the best musical talent of the world will engage the attention and usurp the thoughts of the godless voluptuous throngs from thinking of God, and as an offset against the warnings and prophecies of the two witnesses then witnessing for God on earth, they comprise harpers, musicians and pipers. See Revelation 11.

The merchant princes of the earth will here set up their dwellings—furnished luxuriously; fine linen, purple and scarlet in abundance everywhere, with gold, precious stones and pearls—a description which carries the memory back to the inspired record of the great city that Nebuchadnezzar built and exulted in when God smote him.

In keeping with all this splendour, a vast military force will be at the call of its king, gathering here and there at the sound of the trumpet. This will be necessary to guard the great city and to hold what is brought in, to control the hordes of captives that will throng the city to do the menial work of the inhabitants and provide sport as of yore when Rome held holiday.

RELIGION AND MORAL STATE.

A great city like this with every attraction that wealth and Satanic power can give, must have

some common centre of worship. It is widely and freely acknowledged that man as constituted must worship something. The devil well knows this. In the midst of Daniel's 70th week—which is a period of seven years during which Antichrist the great architect and builder of Babylon will make a seven years' covenant with the Jewish Nation—Antichrist the ruler of this vast place will insist that he be worshipped as God, in common with a similar demand over the civilized world. The devil has previously given him his own seat and authority and energises the man and here in mighty measure the devil gets what he has craved for through all the ages since (and before) his fall, that is, to be as God and having the world to fall down and worship him.

It is common news that at this moment there are devil worshippers in great numbers in this very country. All the anti-christian God dishonouring, devil-inspired forms of worship ever known among men will find their climax in this great city. The devil knows he has but a short time and in Revelation 12—"Woe unto you for the devil is come down unto you"—heaven expresses sorrow for the cup earth has to drink. All the unspeakable orgies and mysteries that exist-

ed in Canaan when God gave the fiat to destroy those nations, coupled with the awful sins rampant before the deluge, will flourish and extend themselves in this seething cauldron of iniquity. Think of the import of those words which describe part of the commerce of the city "bodies and souls of men" white slave traffic in its vilest and most loathsome form.

The prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah give us light on the character of the inhabitants, Jeremiah 50:21, calls it the "land of Merathaim" and their neighbours "Pekod." These mean "Double rebellion" and "Punishment," and give, we think, an inner view of the state of their minds. Idol worship and Jewish images will be in evidence in the city for the king himself will have an image made and doubtless smaller representation of these will be worshipped when he is absent, in the same way as the crucifixion etc. are used to-day.

More than that, there is the spirit of Nimrod, the first Babylonian, amongst them, insolence and defiance against God. Having thrown God out of their reckoning, they go back to sorcery, necromancy, witchcraft, spiritualism in all its most diabolical forms.

This city being primarily the centre of wicked-

ness in the great tribulation period of three and a half years, they manage to deceive the other nations by the abundance of their enchantments and their wickedness. See Isaiah 47:9, 10.

It appears from Daniel 11:33, that many of the Jews will fall by sword, flame and captivity, and by spoil many days. In whatever measure this has been the lot of the Jew in past days, it will be more so in the tribulation period which extends from the time Antichrist breaks his covenant with the nation unto the coming in glory of the Lord Jesus. We have abundant Scripture allusion to Israel being led captive just prior to their final ingathering to the land of their fathers. Many will be burnt to death; this is the purport of the "flame" mentioned above. Of those taken captive many will be carried to Babylon as their forefathers were, and it will be true again of the nation "By Babel's streams we sat and wept." It is possible this view has not presented itself to the reader but the Scriptures to follow later on prove this to be so without a doubt.

It will be easily seen that with the great projects filling his mind, Antichrist will not be able to remain in person at Babylon, his new inland centre, but will doubtless be moving here and

there in Southern Europe, Asia Minor and Egypt, as Scripture shows us when speaking of his numerous wars. That being so he must leave someone in charge with full powers to deal with every matter as it comes up. The Inspired Record speaks of this one as the "King of Babylon" *(Jer. 50:43; 51:31)*, and in chapter 51:46 he is named "the ruler." He is not to be confounded with Antichrist, who is the supreme ruler. We have to-day in our Indian Empire many petty kings who have their acknowledged sphere, and yet own King George V as Sovereign. Should any of these at any time become rebellious and refuse to own this right, the whole of the forces at the command of our king would be available to stamp out the rebellion if necessary. The Indian Mutiny was an example of this.

Many of our readers will know how Babylon became a separate empire from Nineveh. For the sake of those who do not, the following facts are given. When the Assyrian Empire was in its decline, the neighbouring kingdoms began to make inroads upon it, especially Media the King of Assyria divided his forces into two portions—one to keep the Medes in check—while the second was sent southward to Babylon to defend it against

his enemies. The general in supreme command was a man of noble rank and a warrior, known in history by the name Nabopolassar. He failed so far as carrying out his king's commands were concerned, for on reaching Babylon, he declared himself independent, throwing off his allegiance to Assyria, and laid the foundations of what has since been known as the Babylonish Empire, which existed about 84 years.

The same proceedings will be enacted in the rebuilt Babylon. The man left to represent the supreme ruler Antichrist, will watch his opportunity, and while the wilful king is pursuing his conquests in some foreign part, all allegiance will be thrown to the winds and sovereign rights will be demanded by this one from all the inhabitants including the military forces. He will assume the title of king as before quoted in Jeremiah 50:43, etc. It will be understood by all that this proceeding will in due time reach the ears of Antichrist himself, but having his hands full in other lands and only capable of being in one spot at the same moment, he defers taking serious action.

The key to unravelling the mystery of why he, the beast and the ten kings, hate the woman or city and burn her with fire, after having built the city *(see Rev. 17:16)* is seen here.

The inhabitants of Babylon have a report borne home to them, an ominous rumour, that death and destruction are coming to the city unless the rebellion ceases. Many hearts faint and fear settles down on many. However, the danger seems to pass away, as no expedition is sent against the city. Jeremiah 51:46 says the rumour is revived after the expiry of a year, and a vast company is dispatched against the great metropolis which brings violence in the land "ruler fighting against ruler." This means that the beast or Antichrist as supreme ruler will seek to subjugate the ruler he left in charge of the restored city during his absence.

THE GREAT EXPEDITION.

The prophecy of Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, gives full details of the great expedition—where they assemble, their marches and their weapons; the physical condition of the country, the condition of the inhabitants in the city, their arrogance; condition of the captive Jews, their escape before the siege begins; voices from heaven, their flight across the Syrian desert, how they are sustained.

From what has gone before, all the happenings in regard to Babylon seem to be the unaided

result of man's workings. However, the Scriptures are very clear that God's hand, unknown to the chief actors, is surely making all these events work out His sovereign will. Neither the blasphemy of Nimrod its early founder, nor yet that of any of its succeeding potentates has been forgotten by God. This "great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth," this "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" is soon to be no more. The golden cup of iniquity which she has held out to all nations and which had been so freely drunk and emptied, has been the reward God has given them for refusing the cup of salvation held out in the day of grace. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" *(II Thess. 2:8; Jer. 51:8)*.

It may be the reader is still among those who are rejecting the Son of God. If so, your position is perilous; these awful days are fast approaching —you cannot afford to delay settling the all important question of "Where shall I spend eternity?" Receive Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour here and now by simple faith in His shed Blood and finished work.

On one hand the ten kings with Antichrist muster a great host, but the anointed eye that reads the inspired prophecy can see what their blind eyes can never see; God has been long silent, so much so that men have said "There is no God." The time comes when He awakes as a mighty man rising out of sleep. Isaiah 13:4: "The Lord of Hosts mustereth the host of the battle, they come from a far country." The Medes are mentioned as one of the city's opponents (this is near to North Persia and now under Russian sphere of influence). Verse 4 states that the noise is that of the kingdoms of nations —a great people. Jeremiah 50 makes it plain that the nations which come against her, are from the North. See verses 3, 9, 41. "Many kings shall be stirred up from the uttermost parts of the earth" *(vs. 41, R. V.)*. God calls them "strangers" in chapter 51:2, "the nations" in verse 27. "Ararat, Minni, Ashchenaz" are specially mentioned. These doubtless join in with the other ten kings in sending troops against their common enemy Babylon. Their character is described as being cruel and having no mercy: their voices roar like the sea: they ride on horses—speaking to us of vast cavalry regiments drawn from oth-

er fields of strife to subjugate this new Babylonish usurper—trained veterans they are, all expert in shooting, no shots sent in vain.

Such are those chosen by God to carry out His will in the humbling of Babylon.

It must be remembered that during the last 3½ years of Antichrist's reign, no rain will fall for the two witnesses have shut up heaven during the days of their prophecy. It follows that all springs of water will dry up, and as the destruction of this great city is towards the end of the 3½ years' tribulation period, chapter 50, verse 38 says "A drought shall be upon her waters and they shall be dried up."

The knowledge that such a great host is approaching Babylon has a withering effect on the inhabitants. The ruler of the city—here called *(chap. 50, vs. 43)* "the king" becomes feeble; anguish takes hold of him and pangs as of those in travail. The men of war run away suddenly from the attacking forces. The proud one—called the king in other Scriptures—falls during the battle and none raise him up *(chap. 50:32)*. The young men and all the fighting host are utterly destroyed, both in the country around and in the city streets *(chap. 51:4)*. The number of the be-

sieging force is so great that God likens them to the cankerworm both as regards men and horses. The mighty men of the city forbear to oppose the invaders. They hide in their strongholds.

The houses are set on fire. The bars are broken and terror affrights them. The groans of the dying and wounded fill the whole land *(chap. 51: 52)*.

The destruction of life is enormous: none seem to escape. The governors, deputies, wise men, princes and mighty men, all lie low in death at the finish of the siege.

One of the most remarkable happenings of coming days will be in connection with the captive Jews in Babylon. It is the time of "Jacob's trouble" but he will be saved out of it.

We believe Scripture points out clearly that a great company will hide in the desert and mountainous countries of Edom, Moab and Ammon, and ultimately pass back to Palestine when the Lord Jesus comes in glory. This is fully dealt with in another work.*

A great multitude of exile Jews will be taken to Babylon, and will be in the city during the latter days of its existence. God's eye is specially

*"What shall be done in the dry?"

upon them, watching them in their deep sorrows like those in Egypt of old and speaks from heaven for the first time since He spoke on Mount Sinai. Revelation 18:4: "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her pledges." Jeremiah 50:8 says "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans." Jeremiah 51: 6 says "Flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul, be not cut off in her iniquity." Verse 9—"Forsake her and let us go every man to his own country, for her judgment reacheth unto heaven." Verse 45—"My people, go ye out of the midst of her and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." Isaiah 48:20 says, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, 'The Lord hath redeemed His servant, Jacob.' "

It is very clear that these Scriptures refer to a future day as reference to each will show by their context. When the captivity came home in Nehemiah's day, there was no fleeing and Babylon was never destroyed, as told out in the Scriptures quoted above.

Many references are in the Old Testament prophecies regarding a future return of Israel from captivity. In the chapter before us we read, verse 4, "In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward." In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found, for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant" *(Jer. 50:20, R. V.)*. "The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of His temple" *(Jer. 50:28)*.

From these quotations we see that prior to the attack on the city, the captive Jews are enabled to flee by Divine intervention and thus escape the destruction that will overtake the city. The story of how Lot—long centuries before—was hurried out of Sodom and escaped with his life before the judgment fell, will have its great counterpart here at Babylon. They will at once make across the great Syrian desert in a straight line possibly for Pal-

estine. The prophet hurries them on. Listen! "Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the Lord afar off" *(Jer. 51: 50)*.

We are familiar with what happened at the siege of Jerusalem how Titus for some unknown reason, withdrew the troops that were forming a cordon around the city, making it possible for many Jews within the walls to escape, which they did to a city named Pella and thereby were delivered from the destruction of the city that came so overwhelmingly a day or two afterwards.

Some such similar occurrence will take place at Babylon according to the Scriptures quoted. From this great city to Jerusalem across the desert is a journey of about 500 miles. Being warned of God to flee, they may be able to take with them some supply of food to enable them to begin the journey but the great difficulty of transport will be water. It is also the time of the great drought that is eating up the land; waters everywhere becoming stagnantsome like blood, fish dying in others—and so it seems certain death to undertake such a journey. "Better die in Babylon" unbelief would say but God's voice has rung out from heaven "Flee and deliver every man his soul."

How then is this great need to be met, to prevent their dying of thirst?

Isaiah 49:10 speaks of prisoners escaped from their bondage and travelling through deserts "They shall not hunger nor thirst neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." They are said to come from North-west and the land of Sinim. The true location of Sinim is unknown but is generally conceded to be East in the direction of Shinar or beyond. Isaiah 41:17 further foretells "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittar tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree and the pine and the box tree together." God thus prepares the desert through which these freed captives are going to pass to abound in trees that will shelter them from the sun as they pass through from Babylon to Jeru-

salem. Why is this done? Let God answer. "That they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."

Isaiah 42:16 has further promises "And I will bring the blind by a way they know not, in paths that they know not will I lead them; I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things will I do and I will not forsake them."

Isaiah 43:14, speaking of this self same deliverance from Babylon, says, "For your sakes I have sent to Babylon and have brought down all of them as fugitives" and in connection with that He says, "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour Me, the jackals and the ostriches because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

The picture before us here is that as soon as they enter the desert on their flight from Babylon, God does a new thing—creates something before the wondering eyes of His fleeing people. The great earthquake that will demolish Baby-

lon and the cities of the nations, will cause great physical changes in the vast Syrian desert. Living waters will spring up everywhere along their line of march, from which they will quench their thirst. However, life would be impossible without shelter, as this time of which we speak will be near those days when God is pouring out His wrath on men because of their sins and is scorching men with great heat. How does God overcome this and provide shelter? In the same way as He provided for Jonah long before. "God prepared a gourd and made it to come up in a night to cover Jonah from the fierce heat of the sun." Think of this marvellous growth in a night! a leafy bower sufficient to be a shadow for him.

In the future time of Israel's deliverance, God will cause the cedar, pine, myrtle, acacia, box, etc. to spring up out of the refreshed ground and rear their heads so that the great host of fugitives may walk in comfort under their shadow—a continuous leafy bower. It will be signally a work and creation of God and from close reading, I judge will extend many hundred miles across the desert. What a future lies before Israel! The beasts of the desert will participate in these living wa-

ters, but will be harmless to the people God is protecting. Isaiah 49:10 gives sure promise that they shall not hunger, their food shall be given them as they pass along the way. "Their pastures shall be in all high places." How this reminds us of God's care of His people as it was in olden days when they came up from Egypt!

If this is so, we would expect to have added proof from Scripture. Let us enquire. Isaiah 40:3 tells of a straight highway in the desert where the valleys are raised up and the hills made low. Isaiah 35:8 says "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it (unclean here is singular and may refer to Antichrist's followers who may pursue the fugitives as the Egyptians did of old) "No lion shall be there nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there (those from Babylon) and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion" *(vss. 9, 10).*

Isaiah 30:25: "And there shall be upon every high mountain and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of water in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall." Isaiah 11:16:

"And there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

Psalm 107:4: "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way," verse 7, "And He led them forth by a right way that they might go to a city of habitation." Verse 35: "He turneth the wilderness into a standing water and dry ground into watersprings." 40th—"He poureth contempt upon princes (Babylon) and causeth them (His people) to wander in the wilderness yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction."

Some will question how Israel could thus get safely away from Babylon unobserved. In answer to this, it is well to remember that God has foreseen this escape from all eternity, and as Babylon falls after the Jews escape, the attention of the besiegers will be fixed on the city rather than the fleeing captives.

It is almost certain that the troops of the ten kings who come to Babylon will do so along the railway line which will probably branch off far North of Damascus to go Southward to Jerusalem and Eastward to Babylon and the Persian Gulf. In this way a look at the map will show

how God arranges to keep the troops from Babylon away out of reach of His people who are making their way to Zion.

Speaking generally it would seem that after the fall of Babylon a week or two elapses before Christ comes, and would allow time for the fugitives to reach Palestine about the time the Lord descends in glory. It seems they will approach it somewhere in the vicinity of Edom. See Isaiah 21 where a company is seen keeping continuous watch upon a tower day and night and looking longingly across the desert. He says "Behold, here cometh a troop of men horsemen in pairs" and the reason for their appearance is given, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen and all the graven images of her gods are broken to the ground." This would seem to point out the arrival of those we have seen leaving Babylon. Arriving thus in these quarters, they join the remnant who are protected by God during the tribulation in the land of Edom, Moab and Ammon.* These together are part of the great company seen coming up from Edom when the Lord comes in judgment. Isaiah 63:1: "Who is this that cometh from

*"What shall be done in the dry?" S. E. Roberts. Publisher. London.

Edom? I that speak in righteousness mighty to save."

Returning to the city Babylon from which the Jews had just escaped as we have seen, the prophet tells of the great carnage that will attend the final onslaught on the great metropolis. A great fearfulness takes hold of all the inhabitants and their fortifications fall to pieces before the invaders; no mercy is given. The full cup of wrath that other nations have drunk out of at Babylon's hand in past centuries is filled full to the brim and the city of abominations and devil worship, crime and lust, commerce and idolatry, blasphemy against God, injustice and corruption, now drains that cup to its dregs—not an inhabitant escapes *(Jer. 50:29)*. It is stated that "God has opened His armoury and brought forth the weapons of His indignations." The attack is compared to a destroying wind that will fan and purge Babylon clean. God uses the figure of one setting a snare and says "I have laid a snare for thee and thou art also taken; O Babylon, thou wast not aware: Thou art found and also caught because thou hast striven against the Lord." The storehouses are opened, the treasures spoiled and it seems that just as victory is assured and the

vast riches of the place are in their hand, the greatest earthquake ever known on earth or in the memory of man will take place, and the great city will be divided into three parts becoming an indescribable mass of ruins, and like San Francisco, catch fire, and in a few moments become a conflagration that cannot be extinguished. Thus the fires begun by the besiegers will be augmented by those due to the earthquake and in one short hour death, mourning and famine will be their portion. No vestige of Babylon will remain. The bituminous nature of the ground will cause the ruins to burn for a long time. The after description of the place is "A burnt mountain rolled down from the rocks." Again and again God speaks of the desolation that will be the portion of this great city. No more commerce, no harvests to be gathered into her granaries, the music and minstrelsy perished for ever, no craftsman to work at his calling, no joyous meeting of bride and bridegroom, no light—all gone. Babylon will sink like a stone in the mighty depths to rise no more—an everlasting reproach and hissing as long as earth remains; no stone for a corner then. The merchant ships coming in to her port with their costly freight, will stand afar off seeing the

great smoke and burning, as they did at Mount Pelee some years ago and say "Alas! alas! that great city, for in one hour is she made desolate." Think what a burning that will be, millions of pounds worth of merchandise as recorded in Revelation 18; the splendid buildings, the innumerable slain a great holocaust—the price of sin and blasphemy against God. Think of the end of all this splendour, of the labour and wealth spent in vain, the great expenditure of time and money that building this city will entail. The nations will be so blind that although the Word of God clearly foretells that the destruction will be sure, sudden and overwhelming, yet they will not believe. Thus saith the Lord, "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly overthrown, her high gates burned with fire and the peoples or nations shall labour for vanity and the nations for the fire and they shall be weary" *(Jer. 51:58)*. Here God declares that all their effort and toiling is for the fire that is "the great day of Babylon's destruction by fire."

It is not contended that all the prophecies will have their absolute fulfilment at the final desolation of Babylon, because in some of past sieges the city has undergone, some have been partially

fulfilled. There is no siege or description in history that agrees with the prophecies which we have been tracing. Babylon has decayed but was never overthrown in the manner described, namely "by fire" and "in one hour death, mourning and famine."

The same earthquake that will level Babylon will be felt elsewhere for we read "the cities of the nations fell" *(Rev. 16:19)*.

That this is not the great upheaval of nature that will take place when Christ comes is clear from chapter 14:8, where Babylon falls, and soon after other angels follow breathing out judgments on those left on the earth. We repeat again that an interval elapses between the fall of the great city and the coming of the Lord. The time will be sufficient for the attacking forces at Babylon under the ten kings to return via the railway to Damascus thence South to Jerusalem to assist in the siege of that city which has evidently rebelled on hearing the fate of Babylon. Antichrist himself, at the moment the news reaches him, is down in Egypt, where he has defeated the king of the South. The glory and satisfaction is short lived, for Daniel 11:44 states "Tidings out of the East and out of the North trouble him." East

speaks of the unexpected destruction of his inland capital Babylon; the North tells of the revolt of the Jews in Jerusalem. Full of fury and bitter revenge he moves his own troops Northwards to join with those he has summoned from Babylon. Having effected a junction, the siege begins *(Zech. 14:12)*. The city is taken; pillage and rapine, with all its horrors sweep over the city, captives by thousands are taken and led out of the city, to be sent doubtless to rear another city on the ruins of that first destroyed. But God has other thoughts. Jerusalem's cup is full; she has drunk the dregs for the last time. The times of the Gentiles have run out.

The Lord descends from heaven and smites the wicked one with the brightness of His coming. What a sight for earth to see! The Son of God attended by myriad angels and glorified saints in awful majesty revealing Himself to earth's gaze. No longer the meek and lowly Nazarene, but Him of whom Isaiah wrote "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. These titles now appear in their true light. Earth's rightful Lord has come to claim the kingdom. The usurper and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire. The great hosts are smitten by plague and disease, and like the

great Assyrian host under Sennacherib long centuries before, when Israel rises on that first Millennial morn, their enemies are all dead around them. The nations begin to bury them, which takes them seven months, and to gather the wood and debris on the battlefield seven years; so much so that no wood is cut down out of the forest during that time. Then Jerusalem puts on her beautiful garments and rises from the dust of at least two thousand years. The cloudy pillar by day and the shining of the flaming fire by night tells all those left of the nation that Zion's rightful King sits upon His holy hill. Well may every one who reads this pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Events at present (1913) show that the Turk is being pushed into Asia Minor. God's purposes are ripening fast. We believe from there the Antichrist will arise unknown at first, but eventually to develop little by little until he meets his end as we have seen.

These thoughts are suggestive only to students of the Word and if any reader is thrown back on the Scriptures to prove what is put forth in these pages, the desire of the writer has been accomplished in so far that saints have been induced to search the Scriptures.

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